814 phrase one hears often but without further elucidation. Although there are many ruins of old town houses and plantations dotting the area and even the town streets, few people can tell anything about them or about their former illustrious owners.

217 Almost no historical documents can be found in the town, as most of the old records have either been destroyed by insects and dampness or burned at intervals when there was no longer room for their storage, or else have come into private hands in small quantities. Most clerical records of the convent and mother church of the parish have disappeared, although undoubtedly some are stored in church archives in Salvador and [127] Olinda (Pernambuco). Some information was obtained from the office of the justice of the peace, where records go back to 1800 and consist mostly of testaments and inventories and records of a few lawsuits involving property, including slaves.

621 The community of Vila Recôncavo gives the impression of being a large private preserve. The town serves as contact point with the outside. Although the inhabitants of the community frequently leave it for business or visits, it is seldom that a stranger enters the area. There are no facilities in the town or in the rural area to care for one who has no family ties in the community. Going along the roads of the community one can identify practically everyone encountered, if not by name then at least as to where he is from. The higher a person's position on the social scale, the more likely he is to be known by name to a great part of the community. Strangers are probably someone's guests. But the appearance of an unidentified person alone gives cause for speculation.

/17 cont./

175 439 167 829 609 *563 829 *563 Given the isolation in which Brazil remained at least until 1808, the moment when for the first time its ports were opened to international commerce, given too the fact that Bahia was never a center of massive European immigration, like certain southern states, the foreigner is received by the people of Bahia with a mixture of curiosity and distrust. At the same time, the emigrant is easily absorbed here by the milieu and likewise adapts himself to the customs and norms of local life. The Portuguese emigrants, for example, are put in a special category; one has the habit of saying that not one of them is ever, properly speaking Brazilian, but that he is never, properly speaking, a foreigner either. In spite of the two world wars, one nowhere notes manifestations of antipathy with regard to German, Austrian, or Italian emigrants. The nationals of these nations have, in general, an excellent reputation because they are considered good workers, because they marry Brazilians and remain in the country when their businesses prosper. The vast majority of the population and even the persons who are hostile to the "Russian" merchants never have anti-Semitic sentiments. When, however, a Jewish group publicly protested against the presentation of a European musician accused of having had ties with Hitlerism in the past, the association that organizes concerts of famous musicians rejected "this attempt at outside interference dictated by /18/ racial prejudice," declaring that its activities ought to remain "above all religious, philosophical, political, racial, or class prejudice." And yet numerous Israelites are members of this association.

[443] [178] The "Arabs," although living quite isolated in accordance with their customs, marry Brazilians, and no hostility is ever manifested with regard to them; at the time when some of them were carrying on the trade of itinerant vendors of fabrics and hardware, they were ridiculed somewhat, it is true, but that stopped with the disappearance of the last peddlers.